CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An appliance for vacuum packaging a container comprising:

a first component;

a removable trough slidably coupled to the first component;

a second component operatively coupled to the first component and moveable between a first position and a second position, the second component having an evacuation chamber configured to form a vacuum chamber with the trough when in the second position, wherein the vacuum chamber is adapted to receive an open end of a container; and

a vacuum source coupled to the evacuation chamber and configured to evacuate the container for a first desired amount of time.

2. The appliance according to claim 1 wherein the first component and the second component are configured to form a substantially hermetic chamber within when in the second position.

3. The appliance according to claim 2 further comprising a sealing mechanism for thermally sealing the container for a second desired amount of time.

4. The appliance according to claim 1 further comprising a gasket coupled to a perimeter of the trough such that the gasket is positioned between the trough and the evacuation chamber in the second position.

5. The appliance according to claim 1 further comprising a gasket coupled to a perimeter of the evacuation chamber such that the gasket is positioned between the trough and the evacuation chamber in the second position.

6. The appliance according to claim 1 wherein the first component further comprises a trough bay for receiving the trough.

7. The appliance according to claim 6 wherein the trough bay is configured to restrict undesired movement of the trough therein.

8. The appliance according to claim 6 wherein the first component further comprises a trough port in communication with the trough bay, wherein the trough is slidably coupled to the trough bay via the trough port.

9. The appliance according to claim 8 wherein the trough further comprises a handle configured on an end proximal to the trough port.

10. The appliance according to claim 8 wherein the trough port further comprises a slidable door having a handle.

11. The appliance according to claim 1 wherein the first component further comprises a device for cutting the container at a desired location along a dimension of the container.

12. The appliance according to claim 11 wherein the cutting device further comprises:

an area defining a slot along an outer surface of the first component;

a handle located on the outer surface and slidable along the slot; and

a blade operatively coupled to the handle and located on an inner surface of the first component.

13. A vacuum packaging appliance for use in evacuating a container, said vacuum packaging appliance comprising:

a vacuum source;

a base defining an upper support surface and including a trough, said upper support surface and said trough adapted to receive an open end of said container, said trough useful for capturing liquids and contaminants removed from said container during operation of said vacuum packaging appliance, said trough removable from said base; and

a lid operatively associated with said base, said lid and trough defining a vacuum chamber there between to receive said open end of said container, said vacuum chamber operatively coupled with said vacuum source.

14. A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 13, wherein said vacuum packaging appliance further comprises a heat sealing mechanism arranged to heat seal said open end of said container.

15. A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 13, wherein said trough is coupled to said base via a tongue and groove such that a user may remove said trough by pulling said trough in a sliding motion out from said base.

16. A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 15, wherein said trough has a handle for ease of pulling said trough from said base.

17. A vacuum packaging appliance as recited in claim 16, wherein said handle of said trough can be hidden behind a door in said base, said trough only removable when said door is open.

18. An appliance for vacuum packaging a container comprising:

a base having a trough bay;

a lid coupled to the base and moveable between an open position and a closed position;

a removable trough slidably coupled to the trough bay;

an evacuation chamber positioned in the lid and configured to form a vacuum chamber with the trough in the closed position, wherein the vacuum chamber is adapted to receive an open end of the container therein; and

a vacuum source coupled to the evacuation chamber and configured to remove air from the container for a desired amount of time.

19. The appliance according to claim 18 wherein the trough bay is configured to restrict undesired movement of the trough therein.

20. The appliance according to claim 19 wherein the base further comprises a trough port in communication with the trough bay, wherein the trough is slidably coupled to the trough bay via the trough port.

21. The appliance according to claim 20 wherein the trough further comprises a handle configured on an end proximal to the trough port.

22. The appliance according to claim 21 wherein the trough port further comprises a slidable door having a handle.

23. A method of operating a vacuum packaging appliance to evacuate a container, said vacuum packaging appliance having a lid and a base that must be engaged during operation in order to properly evacuate said container, said method comprising:

inserting a removable trough into said vacuum packaging appliance, said trough arranged to capture at least some of any contaminants evacuated from said container during operation of said vacuum packaging appliance;

coupling an open end of said container with a vacuum source and said trough, thereby forming a vacuum circuit suitable for evacuating said container when said vacuum source is operating;

engaging said lid and said base in a manner intended to close said vacuum circuit;

evacuating said container via said vacuum circuit; and

capturing said at least some of any contaminants in said removable trough.

24. A method of operating a vacuum packaging appliance to evacuate a container as recited in claim 23, wherein inserting said removable trough includes:

opening a bay door in said vacuum packaging appliance;

sliding said removable trough into a groove found behind said bay door; and

closing said bay door.

25. A method of operating a vacuum packaging appliance to evacuate a container as recited in claim 24, wherein said bay door is part of said base, and said removable trough resides in said base when inserted in said vacuum packaging appliance.

26. A method as recited in claim 23, further comprising:

sensing a contaminant level within said removable trough.

27. A method of operating a vacuum packaging appliance to evacuate a container as recited in claim 26, further comprising:

providing a warning feedback to a user when said contaminant level reaches a predefined level.

28. A method of operating a vacuum packaging appliance to evacuate a container as recited in claim 23, further comprising:

removing said removable trough from said vacuum packaging appliance; and

cleaning said removable trough.

29. A removable trough for use with a vacuum packaging appliance, said removable trough comprising:

a chamber suitable for receiving a container and forming a vacuum circuit with said chamber and said vacuum packaging appliance, said chamber suitable for capturing at least some of any contaminants evacuated from said container during operation of said vacuum packaging appliance;

a coupling mechanism for removably attaching said removable trough to said vacuum packaging appliance; and

said removable trough made from a material suitable for washing.

30. A removable trough as recited in claim 29, wherein said chamber is a primary evacuation chamber of said vacuum packaging appliance, and said chamber is elongated with a concave cross sectional shape.

31. A removable trough as recited in claim 30, said removable trough further comprising a groove designed to accept a gasket along an outer perimeter, said gasket aiding in forming a seal of a vacuum circuit of said vacuum packaging appliance.

32. A removable trough as recited in claim 31, wherein said coupling mechanism is one half of a tongue and groove mechanism, the other half of said tongue and groove mechanism being found in said vacuum packaging appliance, whereby said removable trough is arranged to slidably be inserted into said vacuum packaging device.

33. A removable trough as recited in claim 32, further comprising a handle useful for removing and inserting said removable trough from said vacuum packaging appliance.